

April 16, 1986

LB 201, 201A, 300, 311, 311A, 333, 333A
355, 355A, 539, 600A, 600

LB 201, LB 201A, LB 300, LB 311, LB 311A, LB 333, LB 333A, LB 355, LB 355A, LB 539, and LB 600. And if I didn't say it first LB 539, and LB 600. Next on the speaking list I have Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. President, members, Senator Warner has already given you the money side of it, the sanctions that we face if this bill is passed and implemented. But let me tell you the other side of the story. Why do we have a 55 mile per hour speed limit in this country? The reason is back in the mid seventies we had a severe problem with energy and oil crisis and an embargo, and we could not afford gasoline, could not get gasoline, and we ended up coming up with the solution of reducing the speed limit to reduce oil consumption and gasoline consumption. It was in our national interest to try and conserve our energy resources, and we did that, and we found another side benefit and that is a 55 mile per hour speed limit saved lives. So we saved energy, we saved gasoline, we saved lives. Now, we see a change back to the old ways in which we didn't worry much about how much gasoline we used up, if the price of gasoline drops down, it is plentiful, it is very much available, so we are losing that concern about energy that we had 10 years ago. I worked hard to make some changes so we could conserve energy and deal with those problems. I'm afraid what we are going to see is reversion back to the old ways, it's going to put us in bad shape for the future. With the fighting in Libya, with the OPEC situation very volatile, you never know when we're going to be back to an embargo, you are never going to know when you are going to have gasoline double again in price, and you are never going to know when you are going to cut off the supply. I think it is a mistake to change the speed limit for those reasons, as well as the sanctions, and I'd ask you to reconsider and not to vote for this bill. I'd give the rest of my time to Senator Hoagland.

PRESIDENT: Senator Hoagland.

SENATOR HOAGLAND: If I might, Mr. President, I think Senator Warner and Senator Wesely have addressed the energy consumption and the federal aid problems quite well and quite adequately. I'd like to focus simply on the highway safety issue. Now, this Legislature, in the eight years I have been here, has always had a good record on highway safety. We've passed, through the years, strong drunk driving laws that have saved lives. Last year, with some strong leadership from some strong senators, we passed a good seat belt bill that is going to save lives. All